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be read without disgust. "Mr. X," says the translator's preface, "is much less interesting as a superman *in spe* than as an illustration of what a morally and mentally normal man can do with the tools furnished him by our new understanding of human ways and human motives."

The only conclusions to be drawn from these plays wherein criminals, wantons, weaklings, meet is that too unrelieved a view of the degradation of life is as false as the most evasive idealism. Life has at least moments of relief from horror.

YOUR UNITED STATES. By ARNOLD BENNETT. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1912.

There are many ways of writing about a country. One is to live in it, study it, become proficient in its literature, and ultimately reproduce for others a nation and a literature. This is what Professor Giles did for China. Another way is to know nothing at all about a land; to hasten through it, giving frank account of one's impressions for what they are worth. The interest then veers from the country to the writer's mind. It is not so much, indeed, the country depicted that one gets as the instructive reactions of the author, so that the interest is psychological rather than historic. This volume, then, is not in the least our United States, but "Arnold Bennett: His United States."

Of the *Five Towns* Arnold Bennett knows everything. He knows all the people, how they look, and what they think. He has written tales and comedies, exhaustive novels, and great full books about the characters and the lives of the inhabitants. His great genius, perhaps, lies in his power of painting Peter de Hoogh interiors, while the present volume is distinctly of the impressionistic poster variety.

It is only natural that it should not be an accurate portrait of the country. Only a demigod could see a country accurately and correctly in six or seven weeks. Naturally, many isolated incidents seemed to him to point to national characteristics. Allowing entirely for the fact, that the book is not descriptive of a country so much as an account of the adventures of a *Five Towns* mind seeing the United States, we may enjoy the keenness and brilliancy of the volume.

The book is brilliantly written. It is full of fine word-pictures, and if one can afford to be indifferent to the author's art criticism one can rely on his sense of fitness and comparative values. His wonder and delight at our railroad stations, our sky-scraper landscape, our beautiful streets, our leisurely suburban towns, are vivid and picturesque. It is instructive and edifying to set this volume beside Henry James's book of American cities, and from the two any reader might derive an excellent idea of how our civilization strikes the alien and the outsider.

THE TASK OF SOCIAL HYGIENE. By HAVELOCK ELLIS. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912.

In the *Task of Social Hygiene* Havelock Ellis has made one of the most important of modern contributions to the all-absorbing and ubiquitously discussed woman question. It is a book that cannot be too urgently recommended to the facile magazine-writers who are flooding current and evanescent literature with the opinions founded upon their family